3

AN INFALLIBLE

SCHEME

To pay the

PUBLICK DEBT

OF THIS

NATION

In Six Months.

Humbly offered to the Conſideration of the preſent *P.....t.*

By D——n *S*——*t.* Jonathan Swift

As in a Ship, by Tempeſts toſt,
When all is yielded up for loſt,
When thro' the leaky Sides, the Sea
Reſiſtleſs, raging, burſts it's Way,
Deſpair ſets ev'ry Head a thinking
How to preſerve the Ship from ſinking;
Thus Men of each Degree and Station,
Concur to ſave a ſinking Nation. Hudibras.

The SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
Printed for *H. Whittridge*, under the Royal Exchange, and Sold by the Bookſellers of *London* and *Weſtminſter*.
MDCCXXXII. Price Three-pence.

AN IMPARTIAL

SCHEME

To pay the

PUBLICK DEBTS

OF THE

NATION

In Six Months,

Humbly offered to the Consideration of
the present ——

LONDON:
Printed for T. Woodward, under the Royal Exchange, and
Sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster.
MDCCXXXII. Price 1 Penny.

AN INFALLIBLE

SCHEME, &c.

THE great Diſtreſs of this unhappy *Country*, is too viſible to all, except thoſe who have Power to redreſs it. We may obſerve thro' the whole Nation, one univerſal Complaint of the Decay of Trade, the Oppreſſion of Landlords, and the Deficiency of Money; and yet I cannot find among all the Schemes propoſed to leſſen theſe Evils, any one in particular, which ſeems likely to ſucceed.

But what is ſtill an Addition to this melancholly Proſpect of Affairs, is the unbounded *Luxury* and *Extravagance*, both in Apparel and Entertainments, which Perſons of all Ranks and Degrees run into at preſent, tho' in general we labour under ſuch Hardſhips and Poverty.

We are affected in a quite different Manner from all the Nations upon Earth; for, with others, *Wealth* is the Mother of *Luxury*, but with us *Poverty* has the very ſame Effect: With others, *Scarcity* is the Parent of Induſtry, but with us it is the Nurſe of *Idleneſs* and *Vice*.

We labour to imitate our neighbouring Kingdoms in nothing but their Extravagance, without having the ſame plentiful Aids of *Commerce*,

or applying our ſelves to the Study of *Fair-dealing* to maintain it. So that, in ſhort, by our own ill Management, we are brought to ſo low an Ebb of Wealth and Credit, that our Condition ſeems incapable of any Relief.

But, as I have the Intereſt of this miſguided People very much at Heart, I do not intend this Eſſay as a Detection of their preſent Grievances, but as a Remedy againſt them. And for that Purpoſe, I have labour'd to find out ſuch a *Scheme* as will diſcharge our Publick Debt, with all poſſible Eaſe and Pleaſure to the Subject, and in ſo ſhort a Time, that we may neither complain of being oppreſſed with long-continued Taxes, (as ſome unreaſonable People often preſume to do,) nor quite deſpair of being once more in a thriving Condition.

Let us conſider what thoſe *Vices* are, which at preſent prevail moſt among us; and I believe, upon Enquiry, they will be found *Perjury*, *Fornication*, *Drunkenneſs*, *Swearing*, *Slander*, *Infidelity*, *Fraud*, *Blaſphemy*, and many others: Would it not then be worthy of our Conſideration, whether a moderate Tax upon every particular *Vice*, inſtead of laying an additional Duty upon *Wine*, *Hops*, and other Commodities, would not ſupply us with a ſufficient Sum in a very ſhort Time? Such a Tax muſt of Neceſſity yield a vaſt Revenue, and prove the moſt infallible, and indeed the only Scheme for our Proſperity, if it ſhall be thought proper to be continued.

But,

But, before I proceed to Particulars, it may not be amiſs to premiſe, that this Tax is not deſigned for any one County or Province in this Kingdom, but to extend itſelf univerſally over the whole Nation; becauſe different Vices may flouriſh in different Counties, as different Plants in their different Soils; as *Perjury* in one, *Theft* in another, *Diſſimulation* and *Flattery* in another, *Rapine* in another, and ſo of the Reſt: However, I take *Theft* to be our peculiar *ſtaple Vice*.

And leaſt any Diſputes may hereafter ariſe about the Nature of *Perjury*, the Intention of the *Act* in this Particular, or what Perſons are to be ſubject to this Tax, I muſt here alſo premiſe, that every *Lye* confirmed by an Oath, is undoubtedly *Perjury*, whether before a *Magiſtrate*, or behind a *Counter*. And, therefore, we do not doubt, but the trading Part of our People will be great Benefactors to the Publick, in this particular Article, as well as in many others.

Theſe two Things being premiſ'd, let us ſuppoſe that in this large Country, 5000 Perſons are guilty of this Infirmity each Day: Which Computation muſt be allow'd very moderate, if we recollect, that this Number is not above a four hundredth Part of the Inhabitants of this Kingdom, who are generally computed to amount to *Two Millions*. And if we further conſider, what ſtrong Inducements our Natives have to practiſe it, from its being often

ſo

ſo exceedingly beneficial; if we conſider the great Uſe made of it in all Sorts of *Traffick*; the great Demands for it in *Law-ſuits*; the great Advantage of it in *Elections*, and the undeniable Profit of it in all Proſecutions, we ſhall think the Number of 5000 ſtill more reaſonable.

Let us then ſuppoſe every one of this Number to be perjur'd, only once every Day, (which is a very favourable Suppoſition) and ſubject only to a Tax of Six-pence for each Offence; for which Sum, perhaps, he may procure either the Death of an Enemy, an Eſtate for his Friend, or a Fortune for himſelf (all which are eſteemed very deſirable) the Tax will be too inconſiderable to make any one murmur, and yet will yield the Sum of 125 *l. per Day*, towards diſcharging our national Debt.

Beſides, this Tax, tho' very low, may in Reality be very profitable to Mankind; for *Attornies*, *Sollicitors*, *Uſurers*, *Butchers*, and other honeſt Traders, will ſcarce think it anſwerable to the Expence of Time, to forſwear themſelves for any Profit from One Penny to Sixpence, *inclusive*, (as now cuſtomary,) but will at leaſt, for every Tranſgreſſion, expect to gain ſufficient to defray the Tax.

However, I would have all ſworn *Conſtables*, and all *Collectors* of this and many other Taxes, entirely exempted from any Penalty, as privileg'd Perſons; becauſe, by that Means they will be enabled to be very ſerviceable in their ſeveral Stations.

For-

Fornication, as the World is at preſent, would furniſh the Publick with a large Sum, even at a very moderate Tax; for it is now made an eſſential Part of the polite Gentleman's Character; and he that has prevail'd on the greateſt Number, proportionably riſes in Reputation.

Let us then compute, that in the ſeveral Parts of this Nation, 5000 *per* Day were liable to be taxed for this general Vice, only at two Shillings: The Sum ariſing from this to the publick Good, will amount to 500 *l. per* Day, and in Six Months, to almoſt one Third of our National Debt.

I know it may be here objected, that I have computed upon too ſmall a Number, and that I might juſtly account rather upon Twenty or Thirty Thouſand *per* Day, in the ſeveral Counties of this Kingdom: But, tho' I own this Objection to be very ſtrong, if we were to conſider the Opportunities of *Wakes*, *Patron-Days*, *Hay-making* Seaſons, *May-Days*, *Religious Pilgramages to Holy Wells*, *Balls* publick and private, and many other commodious Scenes for that kind of Entertainment; yet I would rather chuſe to err on the right Side, in too ſmall, than too great a Computation.

I know the *Popiſh Clergy* will make ſtrong Remonſtrances againſt this Tax; and plead, that it is deſign'd to oppreſs them; that all Nations of the Earth allow them a *Toleration* in this particular Point, as they are *frail* Mortals,

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and ſworn to *Celibacy*; and what is ſtill worſe, that ſuch a Tax would be the moſt effectual Means to drain them of their whole Revenues: but as I would not have ſuch pious Perſons juſtly complain of the leaſt Rigour, I ſhall readily agree to their being exempted.

Drunkenneſs I would only tax at Sixpence, becauſe it might be prejudicial to his Majeſty's Revenue, to diſcourage it, and conſequently ſubject the Propoſer to Penalties.

Let us then compute, that only Twenty Thouſand Perſons, (which is but one hundredth Part of the People in this Kingdom) were daily liable to be tax'd, the Amount would be 500 *l. per* Day. And how extreamly moderate this Computation is, may appear to any one who conſiders, that beſides the uſual Opportunities of *Taverns* and *private Houſes*, there are *Elections*, *Fairs*, *Mayors Feaſts*, *Univerſity Treats*, *Corporation Dinners*, *Chriſtmas Regales*, *Weddings* and *Chriſtnings*, both in Town and Country, and many other irreſiſtible Inducements to this manly Vice, which would, perhaps, if nicely calculated, daily furniſh us with two Thirds more than our computed Number, and by that Means greatly conduce to the Publick Good.

But however, I would, by all Means, exempt all Country *Juſtices of the Peace*, whether *Squires* or *Parſons*; becauſe it would be unſeemly to ſee ſuch honourable and reverend Parſonages inſulted by meaner Officers, as often as they might be diſcovered in ſuch a Condition.

SWEAR-

SWEARING would be a moſt univerſal Benefit in this Caſe; becauſe at preſent it ſerves to ſeaſon the Diſcourſe of all Ranks and Degrees of Men. It is the principal Ingredient and Decoration of all modern *Jokes*, *Gibes*, *Quarrels*, *Love-Speeches*, *Diſputes*, *Threats* and *Promiſes*, and conſequently capable of affording an incredible Revenue.

However, let us ſuppoſe 40 thouſand Perſons *per* Day, liable to the Tax of 6 Pence only, for each Offence of this Kind; which, conſidering the great Number of *Markets*, *Coffee-Houſes*, *Shambles*, *Barracks*, and *Gaming-Houſes* in this Kingdom, is a very inconſiderable Number; yet even this Article will furniſh us with 1000 *l. per* Day, which would amount to near two Thirds of the Publick Debt.

Our Laws have amerſed each Offence in this way at one Shilling, ordering one Half to the Informer, and the other to the Poor, which in my humble Opinion, was very ill concerted; for if the *Legiſlature* did really intend that this Law ſhould be punctually enforc'd, they ought to have divided the whole *Mulct* between the *Informer* and the *Juſtice*, without any Regard to the Poor, and then, they might be aſſured, it would be vigorouſly executed.

I am already apprehenſive, that all military Perſons will expect an Exemption from Taxes on this Account, becauſe they may plead Precedents for many Generations, may alledge the Power of Cuſtom, the Decency and Comlineſs

of it, when properly mingled with other Diſcourſe, or that the cenſorious World, would perhaps ſuſpect, they knew nothing of *God* at all, if they did not ſometimes mention his Name; and many other Reaſons of equal Weight: But tho' theſe Remonſtrances are very juſt, yet as this is the only Means by which our Standing Army can poſſibly conduce to the National Good, it will be hard to exempt them.

However, as the military Power would infallibly be liable to this Tax in all its Branches, by which Means they might be utterly impoveriſh'd, I believe it may not be improper to allow all *Foot-Soldiers* and *Field-Officers*, all young *Enſigns*, ſpruce *Cornets*, naval *Captains*, *Cabin-Boys* and *Quarter-maſters*, 40 or 50 Oaths a Day, entirely free from any Tax or Penalty.

As for *Slander*, ſuppoſing only 20 Thouſand *per* Day, taxed at Sixpence for every Offence, this Article would daily afford the Publick (at the loweſt reaſonable Computation) 500 *l.*

And as this is a favourite Talent, we might have ventur'd to Tax it much higher; but I would not ſeem to diſcourage ſo charitable a Diſpoſition, eſpecially where it may promote the Intereſt of my Country.

As to the *Ladies*, I have been always too great an Admirer of theirs, to deſire any Reſtriction ſhould be laid on their Pleaſure, either Private or Publick; and therefore I would have them tax'd only half as much as the Men for every little Error of this Kind, becauſe *Slan-*

der

der, in Men, is a Talent unnatural and acquir-ed, and generally practic'd to ingratiate themſelves with the oppoſite Sex; whereas this gentle Failing in *Females*, is innate, and impoſſible to be reſtrain'd; which is a Caſe that demands our utmoſt Compaſſion.

I think all *Drawing-Rooms*, *Aſſemblies*, and all Places of publick Reſort for Ladies ought to be exempt from any Penalty, becauſe it is ſo material a Part of the Diſcourſe and Amuſement of thoſe Places, that to Tax them for each Offence, would be in Effect, to enjoin them perpetual Silence; which, if it were poſſible, would be too great a Misfortune, both to themſelves, and the World, to be exacted from them.

Infidelity and Blaſphemy would furniſh us with a conſiderable Sum; and as they are not originally of our own Growth, but annually imported from neighbouring Kingdoms, they ought to be ſubject to ſome Duty, which in few Years would probably be a vaſt Addition to the publick Revenue. Yet as this Traffick is principally carried on by young *Lawyers*, and *travelling Squires*, any Attempt to tax it, would certainly meet with too vigorous an Oppoſition. But on Condition it might paſs into a Law, I would gladly exempt both *Lawyers* of all Ages, *Subaltern* and *Field-Officers*, *young Heirs*, *Dancing-Maſters*, *Pick-pockets* and *Players*.

Let us now only conſider the ſeveral Sums ariſing from the Tax on our *Vices*, as we have

before computed them, and the Juſtneſs and Infallibility of this Scheme muſt appear demonſtrably.

The Publick Debt of this Nation is about } 300,000 l.

And the Tax

For Perjury - - -	125 l.	per Day.
Fornication - -	500 l.	
Drunkenneſs - -	500 l.	
Swearing - -	1000 l.	
Slander - - -	500 l.	
Total *per* Day	2625 l.	

Which in 182 Days, or half a Year, will amount to 477,750 l. which is conſiderably more than our national Debt.

But leſt by the univerſal Poverty of our People, which is much to be fear'd, or by their growing more virtuous, which never can be reaſonably apprehended, this daily Income ſhould fall ſhort of what we have computed, I muſt humbly beg Leave to offer ſome other Improvements of this Scheme, which will undoubtedly anſwer all Deficiencies.

And for this Purpoſe, what if a ſevere Tax was laid on all manner of Perſons who preſum'd to marry till they were full 40 Years old. If any ſhould prove Fool-hardy enough to tranſgreſs a Law ſo calculated for the Happineſs of Men, each Offence would be of ſignal Benefit to the Pub-

Publick; and if providentially it ſhould prove an effectual Reſtraint, there muſt of Neceſſity be fewer Children in each Family, and of Conſequence, the Number of Beggars and Wretches in this Kingdom, muſt proportionably decreaſe. And what would ſtill be more material, perhaps in one Age, if this beneficial Act ſhould be continued, the greateſt Part of this Country would require to be new peopled from *E-----d*, a Circumſtance greatly to be wiſh'd; becauſe ſuch an Accident would probably cure that Nation of its inveterate Antipathy to the Inhabitants of this, at leaſt for ſome Generations.

As for the Scheme to tax Batchelors, which has lately been propoſed to the Houſe, by one of its Honourable Members, I muſt beg Leave to think it highly improper; becauſe Batchelors of all Ranks and Degrees, are real Benefactors to the Publick, by not furniſhing it either with *Beggars*, or *Oppreſſors of Beggars*, one of which muſt infallibly be the Conſequence of Marriage in this Country.

I would alſo earneſtly requeſt, that all young *Clergymen*, who, with more Paſſion than Prudence, ſhall dare to marry before they are benefic'd, may be liable to a moſt ſevere Tax, equal to a Prohibition; becauſe ſuch Offenders muſt inevitably multiply *Beggars*, live in *Contempt*, and die in *Poverty*.

Theſe and many other Expedients, might eaſily be found upon any Emergency to furniſh conſiderable Sums for the National Debt.

But

But as there will remain about 177,750 l. over and above our Publick Debt, I will allow one hundred thouſand Pounds of it for Sallaries to ſuch Perſons as ſhall be appointed Collectors, and I hope this will be a reaſonable Proviſion, tho' generally above one half of every Tax is expended in paying proper Officers to collect it. The Overplus may be depoſited in the Treaſury for any other pious Uſe.

And if this Scheme ſhould be ſo fortunate as to ſucceed, as I have no Reaſon to doubt, from the preſent Diſpoſition of the H-— of C———s, all thoſe Noblemen who ſhall be appointed Commiſſioners, will have excellent Opportunies of promoting their *Nephews*, *Couſins*, *Footmen*, *Foſterers*, *Valets*, and other valuable Dependents to good Incomes, and Places of Truſt and Credit. But I would, by all Means, have none but *Engliſhmen* nominated to be Tax-gatherers; becauſe we may rationally ſuppoſe, that they will be intirely free from Prejudice, in favour of the Natives of this Kingdom.

Thus would a moderate Tax upon our *Vices* apparently contribute to ſave this Nation from utter Ruin. Many Perſons who have not the leaſt Excuſe for their Irregularities at preſent (except the commendable Publick-ſpirited Contempt for Religion) might then plead in their own Defence, that their Immoralities had preſerv'd their Country. And by this Means, we might be furniſh'd with a Multitude of *Patriots*,

who

who probably would never prove ſo in any other reſpect.

But I muſt humbly beg Leave to diſſent from that religious Gentleman, the admired Author of the *Fable of the Bees*; tho', perhaps, ſuch a Particularity of Opinion may injure my Character with ſeveral of my Lay-brethren of moſt Profeſſions; and I muſt publickly declare, that there can be no other Method, half ſo good as mine, to make *Private Vices Publick Benefits*.

FINIS.